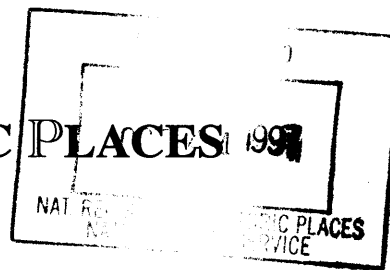


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1453

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Methodist Episcopal Church South

other name/site number: Corvallis United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number: Corner of First Street and Eastside Highway

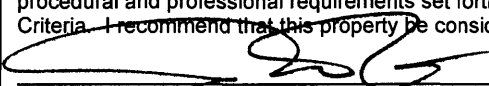
not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Corvallis

state: Montana code: MT county: Ravalli code: 081 zip code: 59828

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

 _____ 10-14-97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

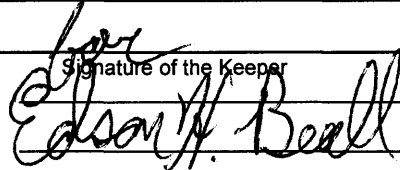
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet		Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	11/24/97
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Building	Number of Resources within Property	
Category of Property: Private	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> building(s)
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Religion: Religious Facility

Current Functions:

Religion: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian: Gothic

Materials:

foundation: stone
walls: wood
roof: wood shingle
other: n/a

Narrative Description

The Methodist Episcopal Church South is a late-Victorian Gothic Revival style church located on the corner of First Street and the Eastside Highway in Corvallis, Montana. The church was constructed in 1894. The moderately pitched roof is arranged in a side gable plan, and is covered with wood shingles. The building is of wood frame construction and is a T-form plan with a side entry tower. The church is clad with clapboard, and in the gable ends cut shingles. Fenestration is composed of tall, narrow, pointed head window openings. Each of the gable ends is dominated by a triplet of these windows continued to a single pointed arch by three square windows set within the pointed arches of the windows below. The windows are 6-over-4 and 4-over-4 double hung sash; glazing is stained glass in shades of purple and gold. The primary entrance is set in the south wall of the tower. This gothic-arched opening houses a 9-panelled door, with a stained glass transom in the peak. On the east tower wall, a gothic arched opening at the first floor houses a sign panel. Both the east and south walls of the tower are ornamented by a circular rosette window.

The belltower today reflects its original design. The tower is square and capped by a tall, octagonal spire terminating in a finial ball. It is roofed with wood shingles. The spire has wood shingle broaches extending to the corners of the tower. Square openings on each side of the belfry are framed by diagonal braces and a small balustrade. During the historic period, ca. 1915, a new bell was added, and about that same time, the spire was removed. However, in 1994, the spire was rebuilt, restoring the church's original design.

Between 1927-30 a large, single-story "fellowship hall" was added at the rear (west) of the church. This addition is offset on the west side of the church and has a gently-pitched roof. It is clad in wider clapboards, and has Craftsman style double-hung windows with vertical 4-over-1 and 3-over-1 sash.

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The interior of the building retains most of the simple architectural features from the time of its construction. Woodwork includes window and door frames and 3-foot-high wainscoting. (The woodwork has been stripped of its dark finish.) Originally, the seating was arranged in a semi-circular pattern with central and side pews facing a recessed altar at the west end. The straight-backed pews in the church were replaced with pews from another church and a wooden pulpit to match. The seating now is organized around a wide center aisle. Stained glass art panels have been added in the sanctuary, and a number of the original stained glass panes in the sanctuary windows have been replaced as they broke over the years.

The fellowship hall is accessed through a doorway from the west end of the church. It is one large, open room for group activities with facilities for cooking and eating.

Integrity

The Methodist Episcopal Church is a very well preserved community church. The original design, materials, and workmanship are intact, and in good condition due to careful stewardship. In addition, the setting and feeling of this property are relatively unaltered from the period of historic significance. The church, on a prominent corner, continues to be a visual landmark in this small rural town in Montana's Bitterroot Valley.

The main impact to the integrity of the church's design is the late 1920s addition of the fellowship hall. This addition, although historic, was somewhat incompatible with the original design intent and sensibilities of the church building. However, the impacts are minimized by the rear placement, smaller, lower scale of the mass, and the use of similar finish materials which have been painted to match the original building. Otherwise, the preservation of the building's design is excellent, and it readily conveys its architectural significance.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Period(s) of Significance: 1894

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1894, 1927

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Corvallis Methodist Episcopal Church South is an important building in this small town in western Montana. Linked to the settlement of the town and the founding of religious institutions locally, the church has long been a visual landmark in this community. It is an excellent example of the modest church buildings which were constructed in Montana's small, rural communities during the late 19th and early 20th century. As an example of the Gothic Revival style of the late-Victorian era, the church is important for its architectural values according to Criterion C, meeting Criteria Consideration A, and thus eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Corvallis Area Historical Overview*

The Bitterroot Valley was long known to many groups of indigenous people, including the Salish who considered this valley their heartland. A deeply carved valley with a mild, wet climate, the Bitterroot Valley was a fertile place for plant-gathering and hunting. The members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were the first known European-Americans to visit the valley. In 1805, the Corps of Discovery traveled through the Bitterroot Valley on their way to the Pacific Ocean. The following year, a portion of the returning expedition traversed the valley to the Big Hole River.

The Salish Indians, along with the Nez Perce, sent delegations to St. Louis in 1831, 1835, 1837, and 1839 requesting Catholic missionaries return with them to teach their people. Jesuits Pierre DeSmet and Gregory Mengarini finally answered the call, establishing St. Mary's Mission near present-day Stevensville in the northern Bitterroot Valley. In 1845, Father Anthony Ravalli assumed stewardship of the mission. One year later, Father DeSmet assembled 2,000 lodges of Blackfeet and Salish at Council Island. He successfully negotiated an agreement ending traditional hostilities with the goal of presenting a united front against the Crow. By 1850, however, growing hostility from the Salish and attacks by the Blackfeet, forced the Jesuits to sell the mission to John Owen (Burlingame, pp. 295-296; Malone, Roeder & Land, p. 62).

Owen converted the mission complex into a trading post known as Fort Owen, and maintained the adjacent farm. Because of his connections with the Kootenai, Salish, and Blackfeet Indians, Owen was instrumental in successfully negotiating the Hell Gate Treaty in 1856. The government representative, Isaac Stevens, appointed Owen special agent of the Flathead Reservation with headquarters at Fort Owen. Although the reservation was officially located in the Jocko Valley south of Flathead Lake, several bands of Salish, led by Chiefs Charlot, Arlee, and Adolph, continued to live in the Bitterroot Valley. Owen extended the agency's agricultural program to draw white settlers into the valley and a few small farms were established in the vicinity of the fort by 1860 (Burlingame, p. 336; Van West, p. 149).

The discovery of gold at Grasshopper Creek in 1862 and at Alder Gulch in 1863 provided the stimulus for agricultural development of the Bitterroot Valley. Along with the Beaverhead, Gallatin, and Deer Lodge valleys, the Bitterroot was one of the primary food production areas in Montana during the 1860s. William Lear wrote "In 1865, one wagon load of potatoes raised near Corvallis was sold in Virginia City and brought [\$1200] in gold dust. They were sold for thirty cents a pound." (Cappious p.61). The valley developed a network of roads and irrigation systems centered on the Stevensville and Corvallis areas. The East Side Highway

* This section is condensed from: Montana Department of Transportation, "Cultural Resource Inventory and Assessment: Corvallis - North & South, RS 269-1(5)6," by Jon Axline. December 1992.

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(Montana Secondary 269) was established in 1870 to facilitate travel between the agricultural settlement of Willow Creek near Corvallis and Stevensville (Montana Genesis, p. 235).

The large number of European-Americans settling in the Bitterroot Valley in the late 1860s and early 1870s caused considerable friction with the resident Salish population. In 1872, growing resentment towards the Indians compelled the Grant administration to declare the Bitterroot Valley surveyed and open for general settlement -- including those lands claimed by the Salish. The government coerced the majority of Flatheads remaining in the valley to relocate to the Jocko Reservation in 1875 and the entire valley was then opened for agricultural settlement. The last Salish left the valley in 1891 (Van West, p. 189; Malone, Roeder and Lang, pp. 121-122; Burlingame, p. 186).

Development of the valley accelerated with the completion of the Missoula and Bitterroot Branch of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1887 and the establishment of Butte Copper King Marcus Daly's 28,000 acre Bitterroot Stock Farm in 1890. By 1900, the number of cultivated acres in the valley reached 177,652, 20 percent of which were irrigated. The success of these farms is readily evident in the substantial Queen Anne, Italianate, and Colonial Revival style houses located throughout the valley (Zeisler, p. 23; Cappious, pp. 66-67).

The town of Corvallis was first settled in 1868, but it was not officially platted until September 1880, when Probate Judge Frank Wood accepted title to the townsite in trust for the residents. The residents had first priority to acquire the lots on which they had already settled. Most of the farms in the Corvallis area were developed between 1885 and 1907 as 160 acre homesteads with some form of irrigation system. Like the surrounding area, Corvallis developed as an agricultural center prior to the initiation of the apple boom in 1907 (Cappious, pp. 66-67).

In 1907, the Bitter Root Irrigation Company and the Bitter Root Fruit Grower's Association promoted the establishment of apple orchards in the valley. The "Apple Boom" coincided with the Homestead Boom that swept through much of Montana at the same time. The companies funded the construction of a large irrigation ditch and sold adjoining lots for orchards. They also encouraged the development of planned communities in the Bitterroot Valley and hired architect Frank Lloyd Wright to plat the community of Bitter Root.

Poor soil conditions and the shaky financial condition of the promotional companies contributed to the "bust" of the apple boom by 1920. Although there were further attempts to rekindle the boom in the 1920s, it was finally laid to rest in the 1930s. However, the farmsteads in the Corvallis area were not reliant on the apple industry, and the local economy continued to thrive. The scenic beauty of the Bitterroot Valley, however, has contributed to the residential sub-dividing of the area since the early 1960s. Today, the Bitterroot Valley is a mixture of small farmsteads and suburban housing developments (Van West, pp. 149-150).

The Methodist Episcopal Church in Corvallis

The Methodist Episcopal Church South was the first active Protestant organization in the Bitterroot Valley, although it was some years until the congregation built a church. Membership rolls included many of the original European-American settlers in the area.

The Reverend L.B. Stateler founded Southern Methodism in Montana when he arrived in Virginia City on a Jim Bridger wagon train on July 10, 1864. By 1870, Corvallis was on his preaching circuit with services held in an area schoolhouse (no longer extant).

Reverend G.O. Hilton was appointed to serve the valley by the Methodist Western Conference in September 1871, but his tenure was cut short when he was killed when a tree fell on him that December. He was succeeded by E.G. Frazier who was stationed in

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Missoula. Frazier organized a congregation of 16 members in Corvallis, which was taken over by Reverends S.J. Catlin and C.W. Sanford in 1873. Through the first year, they enjoined one hundred people into the congregation, and soon began building a church at Corvallis. Minister R. M. Craven headed up the church beginning in 1874, but the church construction project lost momentum and it was not completed. A portion of the uncompleted building reportedly "blew down" after which the framework stood for many years.

Pastor T.W. Flowers, included Corvallis on his preaching circuit beginning in 1876. When the townsite of Corvallis was platted in 1880, two lots were purchased for the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and in the years following the church acquired other lots on the block. J.B. Parnall was assigned to Corvallis in 1889. Parnall was succeeded by Pastor E.J. Stanley, who erected churches in both Stevensville and Victor. (Bitter Root Times, Jan 12, 1894; Sager, History of the Corvallis Methodist Church). During these years, the Corvallis congregation again began planning a church, although it was not until September 5, 1894 that the building was completed. That year, the state's annual Methodist conference was held in Corvallis, and the new church was dedicated by Bishop O.P. Fitzgerald on September 7.

The congregation grew and by 1911, membership numbered 120. That year a new bell was installed, which most likely dates the historic alteration of the bell tower. Originally it was a square tower capped by a tall octagonal spire, and later the spire was removed. In 1994, the spire was rebuilt. At a point between 1914 and 1916, the church united with the Presbyterian Church for six months. Between 1927-30, an annex was built onto the church, expanding the building and creating space for a "fellowship hall." The annex was also pressed into community service during the early 1930s when the local high school burned down; it was used as classroom space while a new school was constructed (Sanborn Map, 1927; Edna Johnson Thomas, page 3).

In 1940, the various denominations within the Methodist Church joined together, reuniting the north and south factions of the church for the first time since the Civil War, to form the United Methodist Church. The church, now known as the Corvallis United Methodist Church, remains active and in regular use. This nomination was sponsored and prepared by the church historians.

Architectural Significance

The Methodist Episcopal Church South is an attractive example of the Gothic Revival style adapted to the changing architectural tastes of the late 19th century. As the century came to a close, the fussiness of Victorian-era designs fell from favor, and simpler, less historically-based designs took their place. The Methodist Episcopal Church South fits firmly into this transitional period. Although the pointed windows solidly link the design to the Gothic Revival style, other defining characteristics of the style are missing. Most conspicuously absent from this building is the emphasis on verticality ("striving for the heavens") which made the style so popular for Christian churches. Where in earlier examples, the verticality provided by the windows would have been complemented by a steeply pitched roof and wall materials continuing into the gable, the unknown designer of this church appears to have consciously squashed its appearance with the broad slope of the roof, the horizontal clapboard siding, and the change of materials to bands of shingles in the gable. Even the spire fails to provide much verticality. It is short in comparison to the width and the height of the tower. Rather than rising upward, its proportions give it the appearance of a "cap" holding the tower down. Also gone from this building are the heavy window crowns, fanciful decorative wood ornamentation, and exposed interior trusses usually found in churches of this style.

The Methodist Episcopal Church South embodies the design characteristics common to Methodism's buildings in Montana. The asymmetrical plan and side tower readily identify this as a Methodist Church; most other denominations used rectangular plans and frontal-towers. The interior plan, too, is laid out differently than what is typically found in other Montana churches. Rather than the altar being located at the narrow end of the nave, it is recessed into the center of the long wall. The central and side pews (historically) arranged in a semi-circular pattern facing it resulted in two aisles instead of one central aisle on an axis with the altar.

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Criteria Consideration

Although a religious property, the Methodist Episcopal Church meets Criteria Consideration A. The building is significant as a finely preserved and representative example of late-Gothic Revival architecture in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana. Its design embodies the style's revision by rural Montanans to fit evolving architectural tastes of the late-Victorian period.

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	11	722240	5132985

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Section 32, T7N, R20W

Verbal Boundary Description

The Methodist Episcopal Church South is located on Lots 2 and 3, Block 1, Original Townsite of Corvallis, Montana.

Boundary Justification

This is the property associated with the church since its construction in 1894.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Janice Park
organization: United Methodist Church date: Spring 1997
street & number: 463 Honeyhouse Court telephone: 406-961-3213
city or town: Corvallis state: MT zip code: 59828

Property Owner

name/title: Board of Administrators, United Methodist Church of Corvallis
street & number: Corner of First Street & Eastside Highway telephone:
city or town: Corvallis state: MT zip code: 59828

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Bibliographic References

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"Corvallis United Methodist Church: 1894-1994," by Corvallis United Methodist Church History Committee, 1994.

Malone, Michael, Richard Roeder and William Lang. *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*. Revised ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991.

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Stevensville Historical Society, comp. *Montana Genesis*. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1971

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Van West, Carroll. *A Traveler's Companion to Montana History*. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1986.

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